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FOREIGN AND INSULAR.

BRAZIL.

Plague at Rio de Janeiro.

RIO DE JANEIRO, *June 2, 1900.*

SIR: At the time of the appearance of plague at Santos I reported an extract of the sanitary regulations that are here in force (PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS, Vol. XIV, No. 47). I then mentioned the steps that had been taken at Santos and Sao Paulo for combating the plague (PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS, Vol XIV, Nos. 49, 51, etc.). Similar measures have been adopted at Rio de Janeiro, and, referring to former communications and the contents of my last report, I shall add here some information in regard to the means with which the authorities hope to combat the plague.

In order to render as uniform as possible the sanitary administration, the Federal Government has assumed the control, and, therefore, the sanitary organs of the municipality are placed under the direction of the board of health.

The patients, whose diagnosis of plague has been verified by bacteriological examination, are transported to the isolation hospital, and suspect patients are isolated. In the same manner the persons residing in the vicinity of the patients are isolated in a suitable manner. The residence of the patient and the articles existing therein are repeatedly and thoroughly disinfected or eventually burned. .

By sanitary inspectors, whose number was augmented, suspect houses, residences, and places are visited and their hygienic correction eventually recommended or supervised. Especially, there are tenement houses, restaurants for the lower class of people, and shops selling provisions, that are inspected; but also such localities at which people are crowded, such as theaters, localities for amusements, tramway cars, and all in which suspect material is kept, such as docks, warehouses, etc. There is supervision for the correct execution of the work of cleaning the streets and places; special attention is directed to the killing of rats and removal of dead rats.

By means of instructions that are far too comprehensive, the attention of the public is directed to the danger of infection, and there are directions by which people at their residences and in their mode of living may take precautions against plague.

In addition thereto there are facilities for prophylactic vaccination. In consequence of the presence of Dr. Terni, it is specially his immunization substance that is generally applied.

Some months ago, when the plague danger first threatened, Prof. Barao Pedro Affonso Franco, who has deserved well of the establishment of the municipal smallpox-vaccine institute, had proposed to erect, beside the other numerous already existing bacteriological laboratories, another one, with the special purpose of furnishing plague serum. He set out for Europe, made the acquisition of the necessary utensils, and of a bacteriological professional, recommended by the Pasteur Institute, the

veterinary, Carré. An evil star seemed to preside over the inauguration of that establishment. Under the present circumstances, however, the sero-therapeutic institute at Manguinhas has been founded.

The spreading of plague from Rio de Janeiro by the way of water is prevented as much as possible by the reported quarantine and the obligation of ships to go to the quarantine station at Ilha Grande with the purpose to be disinfected there.

For the diminishing or removal of danger by land the local inspection of the neighboring States has adopted measures, including regulations in regard to intercourse by railway. Persons and articles are examined, disinfected, and cargoes are admitted only under certain circumstances. The control of personal intercourse is effected by means of passports.

As several cases of plague have already appeared among soldiers, special orders have been issued in relation to the army and marine by the respective authorities.

In regard to the progress of the plague itself I am able to add to my former reports the following :

It was thought that with the cases of plague that have occurred during the month of April, the question had been finished. Notwithstanding still sporadic cases occurred under the denomination of "lymphatitis."

The sanitary authorities only again took notice of the existence of plague, when, on May 6, a case was carried to the isolation hospital.

There occurred another case on May 11 ; 2 cases on May 16, of which 1 was fatal ; further, 2 cases on May 19, and so it was increasing. On May 23 there were 3 cases ; on May 24, 5 cases ; May 25, 11 cases ; May 26, 5 cases ; May 27, 6 cases ; May 28, 4 cases ; May 29, 2 cases ; May 30, 8 cases, and May 31, 2 cases.

According to official reports there occurred from May 6 up to May 31, 63 cases of plague, of which 18 cases ended fatally. Of these 18 deaths, 7 occurred at the residences of the patients. Of the 11 deaths which occurred at the hospital, 5 persons died after three days' treatment, 3 with less than three days' treatment, and 3 arrived at the hospital in a dying state.

Of the 45 existing patients, 27 remained under treatment, 17 are convalescents, and 4 are still isolated, the diagnosis being not yet made.

I have already mentioned the existence of the plague bacillus among rats ; that has been verified also further.

The localities in which cases of plague have occurred are in different parts of the city.

It has been ascertained in several instances that the patients were newly arrived from Portugal and that they had had connection with Oporto.

The measures adopted by the sanitary authorities with the best intention, leave in their execution much to be desired. This is explained by the lack of training of the personnel and by the lack of means at their disposal. The public renders little assistance to the sanitary authorities in the execution of these measures, and in many instances there are obstacles to the proper execution of what is ordered. As nearly always occurs, there is a disbelief among persons of all classes in the existence of plague in spite of all facts that have been made public.

Sanitary report from Rio de Janeiro.

I have the honor to transmit to you the official report for the week ended May 18.

There were 263 deaths from all causes, an increase of 15 as compared with the preceding week; 17 deaths from *accessio pernicioso*, an increase of 5; 3 deaths from yellow fever, a decrease of 6; 5 deaths from small-pox, an increase of 3; 2 deaths from typhoid fever, a decrease of 2; no deaths from diphtheria, 1 before; 2 deaths from beriberi, an increase of 1, and 54 deaths from tuberculosis, an increase of 4.

Bills of health.

Since last report the following-named ship has been inspected and received bill of health of this office: May 27, steamship *Wordsworth*, Belgian, for New York.

Respectfully,
 W. HAVELBURG, M. D.,
Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.
 The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

Report from Belize—Fruit port.

BELIZE, BRITISH HONDURAS, *June 22, 1900.*

SIR: I have the honor to report excellent health conditions in this port. Only 1 death—from apoplexy—reported during the week. The steamer *Stillwater* (Galt) clears for New Orleans this a. m., 32 in crew, 1 passenger, cargo, fruit and mail. The steamer *Managua* (Gundersen) also clears this a. m. for Mobile, Ala.; 16 in crew, 3 passengers, cargo, fruit. Ten pieces disinfected.

Respectfully,
 NORWOOD K. VANCE,
Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.
 The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

Dead fish and disease.

BELIZE, BRITISH HONDURAS, *June 21, 1900.*

SIR: I wish to trespass on your valuable time and give you some of my observations made in this country, recalled by the article in the PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS of May 25, lent me by Dr. Vance, on pages 1312 and 1313, headed by propagation of plague by infected fish, extracts from local journals of Japan, April 24.

I was stationed at Santa Marta, United States of Colombia, in 1893. There were in November and December, 1892, millions of dead fish all over the coast. No one could account for the phenomenon, as it was an unusual occurrence. The natives all over the coast and in the interior of Rio Frio section live principally on fish dried in the sun and shipped in large quantities. In April, of 1893, when I arrived, the country was just recovering from an epidemic of glandular swellings in all parts of the body. My diagnosis was that it came from using purely a fish diet, not attributing this to the dead fish of three months previous. There were very few fatal cases, although many cases were very bad. After reading the article above-mentioned, it recalls a circumstance happening here at Belize in October and November, 1899. There